



# Participant Packet

**Pre-Departure**

## PARTICIPANT PACKET

**Welcome to Israel Food Rescue!** You are about to embark on a mission to support Israel's agriculture community during a time of extraordinary need. You will help heal and cultivate the land following the destruction wrought by Hamas on October 7, 2023.

This mission is challenging and rewarding. You may participate in any part of Israel's agriculture sector, from planting to pruning, harvesting to packing. You may work with a variety of crops, or you may focus on a single one. We go where we are needed, and we do the work that is demanded by the farmers who request our help. Thank you in advance for maintaining an open mindset and a flexible response. We think you'll find this experience to be rewarding and memorable.

In the pages that follow, we will prepare you for what to expect in terms of Israel Food Rescue personnel and services, housing and meals, the typical daily schedule, how to prepare for the farmwork, and traveling to Israel today.

If you have any questions, you can find us on email and WhatsApp.

Thank you for entrusting your Israel volunteer experience to us.

B'Shalom,

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## SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Your Mission Leader will post the schedule on the IFR Daily Schedule WhatsApp channel. Please check the group every day as the schedule may change based on conditions in Israel such as weather and security. However, the below gives a good idea of what the days look like.

Some farmers need us quite early; others do not. We adjust the schedule based on the needs of our farmers. The weather can be hot, cold, rainy, or dry. Your Mission Leader will let you know the forecast for the next day, and whether you should prepare to wear rain gear or a sunhat, rain boots or work boots or sneakers, etc. **We ask that our participants fly in on a Sunday, so that they can have the day to rest and settle in before they begin working on a Monday.**

### Sunday

3:00pm	Check-in to Stay Inn
6:00pm	Dinner in the first floor dining room

### Monday - Thursday

6:30 am	Breakfast in the lobby
7:00 am	Load the bus
7:45 am	Arrive at farm
8:00 am	Agriculture volunteering e.g., in fields, orchards, greenhouses, packing facilities, or other per the farmers' needs
10:00am	Break for breakfast
1:00pm	Return to Jerusalem
6:00 pm	Dinner in the first floor dining room
7:00 pm	Free evening to walk, sit and schmooze, go shopping, etc.

### Friday

8:00 am	Breakfast in the lobby/Check-out of room
10:00 am	Leave for volunteer activity or touring activity in Jerusalem
1:00pm	Goodbyes and depart to airport

## FARMWORK 101

Israel Food Rescue volunteers have picked fruit trees, pruned tomato plants, planted fennel fields, and packed persimmons. The work depends on the needs of the farmers who've asked us for help. Sometimes volunteers can "try" different crops, and sometimes the need is great in one particular field, and your time is spent on just one crop. Whatever you are called to do, remember you are helping farmers who might otherwise lose their livelihood.

Farm labor can require manual dexterity, bending, kneeling, reaching, or carrying produce baskets. Don't worry. Our volunteers have ranged in age from 18 to 83, and we can always adapt the work to their capabilities. There are ways to modify the task to suit an injury or fitness level. Volunteers are encouraged to take breaks when needed.

That said, this is physical labor, and you should be in reasonably good health with full mobility. It's advisable to consult your physician before registering if you have any concerns.

People often ask about what to wear and what gear to bring. The most important rule of thumb is to be comfortable, and to wear layers because temperatures can fluctuate. Cotton can become wet with sweat or water and drain your body heat in cold weather or impede evaporation and cooling in warm weather. Wool and synthetic materials in sports gear are great for long days outdoors. Jeans are fine, although hiking pants, work pants, or athletic wear may be more comfortable.

**We recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants. It will protect you from the sun and any scratches from trees/bushes.**

Shoes must be closed-toed. Break in your work shoes or sneakers before you come!

A sun hat and sunglasses are helpful.

Remember to bring comfortable, casual clothes for the evening and appropriate clothes for Shabbat.

**Please note that your clothes will get dirty, and may get ruined.**

## PROGRAM CHANGES AND CANCELLATIONS

The success of Israel Food Rescue relies on the participant's ability to provide value to host farms, and on the participants' ability to comply with the rules, norms, and standards of the group to ensure harmonic interactions among volunteers during the program. Further, the program is subject to the rules, laws, and recommendations of the government and military of the State of Israel, the United States Department of State, and any updated circumstances of the current war. Accordingly, Israel Food Rescue has adopted the following policies for program termination, changes, and refunds.

1. If the program is disrupted, paused, or terminated due to the security situation on the ground, Israel Food Rescue will provide updates to all Volunteers regarding security alerts issued by Israel Home Front Command and the U.S. Department of State to ensure their safety, and we will make every effort to resume volunteer activities as soon as is practical.

2. If the U.S. Department of State issues guidance on [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) that Americans should evacuate the country, the following will apply:

### FOR VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL:

The program will make every reasonable effort to assist with flight arrangements for the soonest possible departure. The program is not responsible for additional airfare costs or transfer to the airport; your registration fee will be refunded on a pro-rata basis.

### FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE REGISTERED BUT ARE NOT YET IN THE PROGRAM:

You may reschedule to a date within six months of your originally scheduled departure date with no penalty. (Groups larger than 5 people may reschedule within 12 months of the original date.) Cancellations will incur a processing and administrative fee of \$500 USD. The remainder of your registration fees can be donated to Israel Food Rescue to subsidize other volunteers and purchase equipment for farmers or can be refunded to your original form of payment.

3. If the U.S. Department of State Advisory increases to "Level 3: Reconsider Travel" then standard cancellation rules apply, as below.

### FOR VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL:

Any participant may opt to terminate his or her participation in the program at any time, with or without cause, with advance notice given to the program coordinators via WhatsApp, or email to Rabbi Randall Brown and the Mission Leader. No refunds will be issued and no proration will be applied.

## PROGRAM CHANGES AND CANCELLATIONS

FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE REGISTERED BUT ARE NOT YET IN THE PROGRAM:

- For groups of more than 5 people: Cancellations 21 or more days in advance of the first program day incur a \$500 cancellation fee per person; if you must reschedule your group trip, you will incur a rebooking fee of \$250 per person. Cancellations less than 21 days in advance of the first program day receive no refund, but you may reschedule for a rebooking fee of \$500 per person (Rescheduled trip must occur within 12 months of the original travel date).
- For Individuals and groups of up to 5 people: Cancellations 14 days or more in advance of the first program day incur a \$500 cancellation fee per person, or a \$250 rebooking fee if you reschedule. Cancellations less than 14 days in advance of the first program day receive no refund but may reschedule for a rebooking fee of \$500 per person. Rescheduled trips must occur within 6 months of the original travel date.

#### 4. Other circumstances:

If it is possible to remain in the country but becomes necessary to evacuate the program's accommodations, the program will make every reasonable effort to secure new accommodations. Additional costs may be incurred, payable by the participant, and a 500\$ refund will be issued.

If it is necessary to remain in Israel beyond your originally scheduled stay due to the military situation (e.g., airspace is closed, or airlines suspend flights), the program will make every reasonable effort to help you secure continued accommodations, at our location or another. Additional costs may be incurred, payable by the participant. No refunds will be issued, and no prorations will be applied.

5. Any participant may opt to leave the program at any time, with or without cause, with advance notice given to the program coordinators via WhatsApp, or email to Rabbi Randall Brown and the Mission Leader. No refunds will be issued and no proration will be applied.

6. The program reserves the right to terminate any participant's participation in the program if the program, at its sole discretion, deems it necessary, without any requirement to show cause. If the program and program coordinators choose to terminate participation, we will notify the participant via email or WhatsApp. No refunds will be issued and no proration will be applied.

FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE REGISTERED FOR OUR GRANT-FUNDED MISSIONS

1. The \$360 registration fee can be applied towards future trips with a 14-day cancellation notice. However, we cannot guarantee grant conditions beyond December as of now.
2. The \$350 single room can be refunded with a 14-day cancellation notice.
3. If the trip is cancelled due to security risk, the 360\$ registration fee will be returned.

## **INCLUSION AND CIVILITY**

Our volunteer groups have diverse political beliefs and varying levels of religious practice (and sometimes different religions). We strive to be inclusive and respectful of all who join our program.

Therefore, in group discussions and our WhatsApp chats, please do not encourage others to follow or adopt different beliefs or practices. We are all here to help the farmers, and everyone should feel comfortable with their fellow volunteers.



## **TRAVEL IN ISRAEL: SECURITY AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS**

So far, our volunteers have worked on farms near Jerusalem and Ashdod, in areas that have been relatively unaffected by the war.

However, war always brings changing realities, and we cannot guarantee volunteer safety. By joining our program, you are agreeing to accept the risk of traveling and working in a potentially dangerous situation. US citizens can register with the U.S. State Department <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. This way you can be contacted in case of a family emergency in the US, or regarding a crisis in Israel during your trip.

The following safety recommendations were compiled by discussions with security officials and IDF field officers:

1. Before you travel to Israel, download the app pikud haoref from Israel Home Front Command. This app is available for iPhone and Android. Be sure to activate your GPS / location services, and allow the app access to your location. The app will warn you of any dangerous situations based on your location, so keep your phone with you at all times.
2. Carefully review all the life-saving safety instructions in the app, and remember them.
3. Always be aware of your surroundings. Locate the best place to go to in case of a problem, based on the following:
  - All buildings in Israel built after 1973 have a shelter (mamad in Hebrew). This is the best place to go to if you hear a siren. Most older buildings have a shelter nearby.
  - Try to stay calm when running to a shelter. Many people may be seeking shelter at the same time, and it's easy to get injured during the rush.
  - If there is no shelter in the building or nearby, the next best place is a basement.
  - If there is no basement, the next best place is under the staircase.
  - If you are outdoors, find the lowest point on the ground, such as a ditch. Drop to the ground and cover your head with your hands and arms.
  - If you are in a car or bus, exit and move away from it. Then drop to the ground and cover your head with your hands and arms.
  - You must stay in the shelter, or your position of hiding, for 10 minutes after the siren. If there are multiple sirens, wait 10 minutes after the last siren. This is very important, because even if the Iron Dome defuses the rocket, there may be falling debris.
4. Keep your passport(s) with you at all times, in case you need assistance from your embassy.

## TRAVEL IN ISRAEL

<b>Passport</b>	<p><b>A valid passport is required for travel to Israel.</b> Please make sure your passport expiration date is at least 6 months beyond date of return</p>
<b>Hotel</b>	<p>Our group will be staying in a boutique hotel or an upscale and comfortable hostel in Jerusalem. There will be a washing machine and dryer available at our accommodation - and washing pods available at the front desk.</p>
<b>Visa</b>	<p>NEW VISA REGULATIONS STARTING SEPTEMBER 2024:</p> <p>A tourist visa is not required for stays of 90 days or fewer until January 1, 2025. Beginning January 1, 2025, visa or Electronic Travel Authorization.(ETA-IL) will be required.</p> <p>Find out more on this <a href="#">website</a>.</p>
<b>Before Trip To Dos</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call your credit card company and let them know that you will be in Israel so they don't think your charges are fraudulent. Make sure you are aware of any foreign transaction fees.</li><li>• Call your cell phone service and see what they offer for international calls. You can also purchase an Israeli SIM card which will provide an Israeli phone number.</li><li>• Take a photo of your plane tickets, passport, vaccination certificate, etc. While not a replacement, a copy makes it easier to obtain replacements if necessary.</li><li>• US citizens: Register your travel for free with the U.S. State Department <a href="https://travelregistration.state.gov">https://travelregistration.state.gov</a>. This way you can be contacted in case of a family emergency in the US, or regarding a crisis in Israel during your trip.</li><li>• To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country before you travel.</li><li>• Bring one or two major credit cards and cash (see the Money section).</li><li>• Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.</li></ul>

## TRAVEL IN ISRAEL

<b>Immunization and Health</b>	<p>There are no required vaccinations for entry into Israel.</p> <p>Make sure you are up to date on your tetanus shot (every 10 years).</p> <p>The US CDC recommends being up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Routine vaccinations in the US include: Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap), Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR), Polio, Varicella (chickenpox), Shingles, Pneumococcal, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Meningococcal, and annual Flu vaccine.</p> <p>Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the <b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</b>. Phone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) CDC Website: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov">http://www.cdc.gov</a> Traveler's Health Website: <a href="https://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/">https://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/</a> Website form to contact CDC: <a href="https://wwwn.cdc.gov/ContactUs/Form">https://wwwn.cdc.gov/ContactUs/Form</a></p>
<b>Coronavirus</b>	<p>All tourists, regardless of vaccination status, are able to travel to Israel. Testing is not required before or after a flight, and quarantine / isolation is not required. While tests are available in Israel, we suggest you travel with a few.</p>
<b>Customs</b>	<p>You may bring in almost anything you'll need for personal use and convenience. Limited items per adult are: 44 pints cologne or perfume; 2 liters wine; 1 liter liquor; 250 grams cigars or loose tobacco; 250 cigarettes; gifts up to \$200.00 in value. Upon return to the US, you may bring in up to \$400.00 worth of items duty free. Please note: Many Israeli made items are not counted as part of your duty-free allowance as they are exempt from U.S. duty.</p>
<b>Insurance</b>	<p>If you want travel insurance for lost luggage, delay, cancellation, please obtain this on your own.</p>
<b>Value Added Tax</b>	<p>The VAT (Value Added Tax, similar to sales tax) is currently 17%. All tourists in Israel are exempt from VAT when paying in foreign currency for services provided in Israel. It is advisable to charge all of your extras, including meals, to your room, and when checking out, pay in U.S. dollars or via credit card. Anything that is not charged to your room, even if paid in dollars, will be assessed the VAT.</p> <p>When purchasing items worth over NIS 400 in approved shops, be sure to ask for a completed "VAT Refund Form." This will entitle you to a VAT refund at the airport upon departure, located at the VAT RETURN counter (after security, near the Food Court). The refund will be given in cash after you present your purchase invoices. Please be sure to have with you the articles purchased, as you may be asked to present them. Note that items that include creams and liquids such as Ahava products, which are over the restricted quantity allowed by the airline, may not be allowed in your carry-on.</p>

## TRAVEL IN ISRAEL

<b>Currency</b>	<p>The Israeli Shekel (NIS) is the country's legal tender. The Shekel is divided into 100 agorot. The bills are in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 shekels. There are coins of 1,5, and 10 shekels and 5,10, and 50 agorot. You may bring an unlimited amount of foreign currency into Israel, but can only take out up to NIS 1,000.</p> <p>You may wish to exchange some currency at the bank, in order to have cash for incidentals. We recommend that you change only a limited amount at one time, as it will cost you a fee to change back to your home currency. Most places have stopped accepting traveler's checks, but all major credit cards are accepted. There are also many ATM machines throughout Israel. Before traveling, check to see if your bank and credit card companies charge foreign transaction fees.</p> <p>Tourists who have exchanged foreign currency into NIS may exchange their shekels at any bank or at the airport, up to \$500. This will require the original exchange receipt.</p>
<b>Tipping</b>	<p>Tipping in Israel is very similar to tipping in the US. Use your own judgment, based on your personal satisfaction.</p> <p>Here are suggested guidelines for restaurants and hotels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The average restaurant tip is 15%. Tips are not expected at hotels for breakfasts.</li><li>• Maids: We recommend approximately \$2.00 per person per day.</li><li>• Taxicabs: Although Israelis do not normally tip taxi drivers, if you are pleased with the service, we recommend tipping 10% of the fare.</li></ul> <p>Tour guides and drivers: It is customary to show your appreciation to the guide and driver of your tour. Ask your Mission Leader for guidance.</p>
<b>Bank Hours</b>	<p>Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm and 4:00 to 5:30pm. Monday and Wednesday: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Fridays and holiday eves: 8:30 to noon.</p>
<b>Electronics</b>	<p><b>Don't forget batteries, chargers and adapters.</b> The electrical current in Israel is 220 volt AC, single phase, 50 cycles. This is far stronger than the US AC current of 110. A plug adapter will not work unless it is 220 voltage adaptable; most laptop chargers work with both 220 and 110 plugs.</p> <p>Israeli sockets are usually three-pronged, and foreign-made appliances often require adapters for plugs. Travel adapters simply change the shape of your appliance's plug, so pay attention to voltage requirements.</p> <p>Virtually all hotel rooms have 110/220 electric shaver sockets. Our electricity outlets usually conform to European adapters, and hotels and electrical stores can easily supply you with the right adapter if necessary.</p>

## TRAVEL IN ISRAEL

<b>Phone Apps</b>	<p><b>Handy apps to have while traveling in Israel:</b></p> <p><b>Gett and Yango:</b> If you plan on taking taxis, using an app greatly reduces the risk of overcharging. There is no Uber in Israel, but you can use GETT and Yango.</p> <p><b>Moovit:</b> Information on public transportation systems</p> <p><b>Rav Kav:</b> Use this to refill your Rav Kav card (public transportation card)</p> <p><b>Pikud Haoref:</b> The official App of the Home Front Command provides alerts, guidelines and life-saving information in real time according to your location and areas of interest of your choice.</p> <p><b>Star Phone:</b> Phone directory app</p>
<b>Public Transportation</b>	<p><b>Buses, trains, light rail:</b> You can <b>only</b> use the Rav Kav app or Moovit app for public transportation, they do not accept cash.</p> <p>We recommend you <b>download the Moovit app</b>, you can use this app to purchase a bus, train or light rail ticket on your phone. Another option is to buy a <b>Rav Kav card</b>, that you can purchase at the airport and refill using the Rav Kav mobile app.</p> <p>On Saturdays and holidays, you can use a “Sheirut,” or a multi-passenger taxi. This service uses 7-seater minibuses, and operates on the exact routes of public bus lines. You can get on and off the “Sheirut” anywhere along the line, not only at bus stops.</p> <p><b>Taxis:</b> When using taxis, insist that the driver use the meter. Prices change according to time of day, with evening rates typically higher. You can also use the Gett or Yango apps.</p> <p><b>Sherut:</b> Only takes cash, make sure to bring 35-50 NIS with you</p>
<b>Photo Etiquette</b>	<p>Israel’s stunning landscapes and picturesque cities and towns make it truly a photographer’s paradise. Please be aware, however, that there are certain religious communities whose members do not want to have their picture taken. These include certain Orthodox Jewish sects and observant Muslims. Your discretion will save embarrassment.</p>
<b>Shabbat</b>	<p>In Jerusalem, most theaters and restaurants are closed on Friday nights and Saturdays until nighttime. Non-kosher restaurants remain open every day.</p> <p>In all major cities, most shops are closed, except in non-Jewish neighborhoods. Although some museums and public places stay open, they do not sell tickets on Shabbat; you must buy them in advance.</p> <p>Hotel restaurants and room service operate normally on Shabbat, with menu limitations. If you are driving on Shabbat, please be aware that if your route takes you through certain religious areas, residents may be disturbed to see motor vehicles.</p>

## TRAVEL IN ISRAEL

<b>Food and Water</b>	<p>Most Israelis eat a large breakfast, with smaller portions at lunch and dinner. Most restaurants cater to all sizes of appetite.</p> <p>The word kosher means food conforming to Jewish dietary laws. Certain animals and fish are prohibited, and dairy products may not be served together with meat. Most hotels and restaurants have kosher food, though it is easy to find non-kosher restaurants all over Israel.</p> <p>Tap water is safe to drink throughout Israel, and Israel's fresh fruit and vegetables are world-class. Bottled water is available everywhere as well. In hot weather, remember to drink more than you're used to!</p>
<b>Time</b>	<p>Israeli Standard Time is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, 1 hour ahead of mid-European Time. Israel is 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time and 10 hours ahead of Pacific time.</p>
<b>Internet</b>	<p>Internet Cafes and public WiFi can be found almost everywhere. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv have municipal WiFi throughout the city.</p>